



Helena Tourism Business Improvement District Helena Tourism Alliance

www.helenamt.com – 105 Reeder's Alley – Helena, MT 59601 – ph 406.449.1270

To: 2015 Senate Finance & Claims Committee

Re: SB-264 "Best Place First"

The Helena Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID)/Helena Tourism Alliance (HTA) Board of Directors supports Senate Bill 264. This bill would appropriate funds to elements of Montana's tourism that are essential to Montana's future.

Reeder's Alley, which is managed by the Montana Heritage Commission, would be one of the projects that would be enhanced by this bill. We have chosen to locate our tourism office in Reeder's Alley and are always encountering visitors from across Montana, across the country and across the world who are impressed that such a testament to our mining history still exists. Visitors enjoy snapping photos, hearing stories of the Alley's past and dining outdoors in this beautiful setting. The funds that would be allocated to Reeder's Alley as a result of this bill are important to the continued preservation of this treasure.

SB-264 also allocates additional funds that would support tourism marketing efforts. It is imperative for Montana to continue to be able to compete on a national and international level in the travel market. While the Helena TBID works hard to promote the city of Helena as a tourism destination, the additional funds that could come from SB-264 would provide a vital supplement to our efforts. Investing in tourism is wise as a study by the Leisure Trends Group found that each dollar spent on advertising Montana results in \$152 in visitor spending. The outside money, approximately \$3.98 billion, which tourists bring into Montana makes up a valuable industry that we cannot afford to disregard.

The Helena TBID/HTA endorses SB-264 and we encourage you to show your support as well by voting in favor and putting our "Best Place First."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jena Sabatini".

Jena Sabatini, TBID/HTA Board Chair
Owner, Helena Hampton Inn &
Residence Inn by Marriott

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heidi O'Brien".

Heidi O'Brien
TBID/HTA Executive Director